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Little Talks on
School Management

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Little Talks on School Management

By

RANDALL N. SAUNDERS

SCHOOL COMMISSIONER FIRST DISTRICT
CLAVELACK, NEW YORK



NEW YORK
A. S. BARNES & COMPANY

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A. S. BARNES & COMPANY
NEW YORK

TO
MR. OSSIAN LANG

IN HUMBLE RECOGNITION OF HIS
VALUABLE EDITORIAL SERVICES IN
THE CAUSE OF EDUCATION, AND
AS A MODEST TOKEN OF THE AU-
THOR'S PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP
AND APPRECIATION.

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PREFACE

I AM asked to write a fore-word for this little volume, and I scarcely know what to say. It seems to me to be a bootless task; for, in the guilty knowledge that I seldom read a "Preface," I imagine that the majority of readers are like myself and are more anxious to know what the author has to say in the intentional part of the work that is the real occasion for the publication. There is an object in the pages which follow, and you are at liberty to drop this and turn to them at once. In them I have striven to give briefly a history of the things that helped me in my work as a primary teacher, and I have striven to make the "talks" practical and also inspirational. All but one of the chapters, or divisions, of the little book have been published in the pages of educational periodicals, and I am happy to say that I have received commendation for them from teachers of experience, as well as from those who have but recently entered the

profession. I know, from experience, that no matter how thoroughly one has been prepared—no matter how much experience one has had—in managing a school and in attempting to influence a community, a thousand and one problems will arise to test ingenuity and demand solution. “In a multitude of counselors there is strength,” and if this little book, as one, shall be found, in the slightest degree, suggestive and helpful, its mission will have been fulfilled and its author rewarded, in addition to the pleasure he has derived from the labor expended in its preparation.

THE AUTHOR.

HUDSON, N. Y.

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Little Talks on School Management

I

BEFORE SCHOOL

I AM satisfied that the moments spent by both teacher and pupil before school have a great influence on the character of the sessions. The good feeling—or the ill feeling, that may be engendered in those moments of relaxed tension when the pupils are left largely to follow their own inclinations, will surely follow thru the day and be manifested in every exercise and recitation.

If the day has opened with an altercation in the school yard, if it has opened with some trespass that demands a trial and a punishment, a spirit of controversy, of revenge, of sadness, or of sulkiness will pervade the whole day and destroy the possibility of getting the best results from that day's work. On the other hand, if the day be opened in the schoolyard with some game in which all have been interested and

all have enjoyed, and the pupils come in tired for the moment, with that dangerous superabundance of animal spirits in a measure reduced, and with the glow of the brisk pleasure still in their hearts and on their faces, that day will have a briskness and a glow that will be inspiring to both teacher and pupil, and the teacher will close his room with a feeling so seldom experienced, that the day has approached the ideal.

There is always an unknown quantity in the daily experience of many teachers—a quantity that exhausts nervous force, engenders senseless apprehension, and is paralyzing to the best effort. This quantity is found in the equation, “X equals ‘what’s coming next,’” and the constant dread of the solution has been the *bete noire* that has frightened many a teacher from the profession.

It strikes me that one of the prime requisites for a successful teacher is ubiquity, that omnipresence that will enable him to anticipate the events of the day, dissipating the potentiality of the problem by being "on deck" first, last, and all the time, having a thoro knowledge of the "what next" by guiding the impulses that influence its production. In many years' experience, I have found that the moments I spent with my boys and girls "before school" were the most valuable moments of the day. There will be little likelihood of

flagrant transgressions under the eye of a kindly but inflexible teacher. His presence alone, among the boys and girls while at play, is a safeguard, even tho he be meditative and seemingly oblivious of what is going on. And what may not his influence be if he joins heartily in the play?

Whenever I came out in the spring with a hastily fashioned kite or a pair of temptingly treacherous stilts, I was at once the centre of an expectant group, anxious to see me do something which I did not, for I entrusted the trial of all contrivances to the many who were willing to experiment. Need I say that the girls were treated to paper doll dresses that would have made Worth green with envy?

To ball and bat, to croquet and other out-of-door games, to snow forts and snow men, to conundrums, to quiet "sitting down" games "before school," I attribute many of the "best" days for which we ever long. Such days I sincerely believe are to be largely attained thru the "before school" influence of the teacher's interested presence among his pupils, with them, heart and hand, in everything, as a good, but not a goody-good child (?) himself, instructing, by active example, controlling by unostentatious assumption of the leadership when the game evinces alarming tendencies.

That group of idle boys, over there, with their heads together, giggling and sly-glancing, without plot or intention are con-

cocting that which in its influence will make your school-room a miniature sheol for the whole day. Get them busy without delay.

There is still another phase of the subject, on which just a word, and that only a question. Will not the teacher be fresher, better tempered, and less likely to make the very errors against which he would guard, if he spends a portion of the play time on the play ground?

II

OPENING EXERCISES

A MOMENT's calm after the pupils are seated tends to ensure a receptive attitude in schools where the opening exercises are varied and the discipline is good. With the pupil fresh from exercise, that moment of expectant tranquillity is the opened vestibule for the earnest introduction of some sweet or noble guest of thought to the passive mind, ere the workmen, duties of the day or of the session, throng to their places.

As we have staples of diet ever present at the table, so I believe that the Great Teacher's injunction should be followed, in a broad and non-sectarian sense, and that His lambs should regularly be fed the bread of life without sermon or sanctimoniousness. The reading of the Bible, the greatest code of ethics and the grandest literature ever compiled, was the one staple ever present, and I always strove to make the morning lesson from the book of books one of the most interesting of the day. Reverence for things considered holy and to be respected, a reverence so much needed at the present time,—will grow out of the manner in which this thing is done. Treat

the book with care,—put feeling into the rendition of its passages, and the children will catch the spirit of reverence and reflect, but *don't* be sanctimonious or you will be promptly and properly suspected, and the good influence to be desired will be dissipated.

I varied the reading of the Bible. For a week (for illustration) we would read the First Psalm every morning, or until we could repeat it from memory. In this way, in time, a school would learn many of the shorter songs of David and other short selections. Then, again, I would select a portion, reading it a few lines at a time, the lines to be repeated by the school,—a short responsive exercise that is good for fixing attention and that was most thoroly enjoyed whenever I used it. Then, again, I asked some of the older boys and girls occasionally to read, and being selected to read was always treated as a privilege,—a responsibility,—and the reading, without an exception, was always conducted in a manner nowise lowering the dignity of the office.

Sometimes the Bible text suggested an ethical lesson to be briefly and beneficially developed, and sometimes the text was chosen for the ethical lesson it contained and which I had in mind as needed by the school. We were like a big family at this exercise, and seldom did any mischief creep in to mar it all.

As to the singing. In some schools I had an instrument, and was fortunate in having several girls in each to play for me. Altho I knew something of both vocal and instrumental music, I believed that it was far better to employ the talents about me rather than to display those I possessed. It is better to have boys and girls beg a musical treat (?) from you than to become a bore by constantly doing something that several in your school can do as well so far as the simple needs demand.

We varied our singing. The morning song would be in character a hymn, stirring or tender as the mood of the morning needed guiding, or as the nature of the Bible reading or the ethical lesson demanded. A song from the song book, patriotic or sentimental, opened the afternoon exercises, and this was varied occasionally by a solo or a duo, if I had a prospective "bella donna" or two among my charges. A short nature or information lesson followed the song, and I found my boys and girls never weary of learning facts, developed if possible thru objects, about the animals and things by which they were surrounded.

At this time boys and girls were given commissions of exploration and investigation, and at this time reports of research and expeditions were received. There could be, of course, no routine,—no succession,—no regular method; but rather an irregular method that was more effective from its

very variability and novelty. At this time, new inventions and discoveries were explained briefly, and discussed in regard to their value to the world; and every day I demanded of each pupil old enough to read the papers a news item (excluding all record of crime), the more important of which received a word of comment.

Thus varied and conducted, my opening exercises were often the green spots in many a desert day, and I believe that they watered and made fertile many a day that would have been an arid Sahara without them. They engendered the growth and strengthening of attention, reverence and cheerfulness; three buds that are often blighted by a sharp rattling hail of fixed routine or a cold air of indifference at the very threshold of the dawn.

III

GETTING TO WORK

I ASSUME that you agree with me that little of permanent value can be accomplished in school work without good order. The secret of obtaining this without being "cursed for a tyrant or kicked for a tool" is almost as difficult of discovery, for those who have it not, as the fabled philosopher's stone; and those who have become possessors of this magic property of turning all to bright and pleasing gold find it as difficult of description as it was of discovery. Yet this power can be attained, and quickly, by one who has a natural endowment for leadership, and also by one who is under good self-control and practices exactly what he preaches.

In a well regulated school the pupils come in quietly when the bell rings, without laughter, giggling or talking across the seats. After the opening exercises there are two ways of getting to work: One of a careless, noisy, petulant preparation, a hunting up of books, a sharpening of pencils, the doing of a hundred things that should have been done before school and that keeps the room in an uproar for from

five to fifteen minutes, while the teacher stands helplessly rapping for calm; the other, of a quiet, orderly taking up of the implements at hand for use in the tasks of the session. For the attainment and maintaining of this latter condition we must strive.

What a shock it gives a school undisciplined to have an order compelling teacher take control! How injured the big boys look when they find they cannot go for the neglected pail of water! How dreadfully uncomfortable the hot, fussy, red-faced children look when they find they cannot spend ten or fifteen minutes quarreling and splashing like greedy ducklings about the water pail, each in order or rather in disorder, to guzzle down a dipperful of water for no other purpose than to kill time! How they make blunt pencils squeak! How they will idle for want of the book for which they are not allowed to turn the school-room topsy turvy, and how the tardy ones open their eyes to find their lost time charged up to them, to be made up out of play time—in short, how these little obstructionists will squirm and kick until they are satisfied that order is inevitable, and that the teacher is as kindly and inflexible as the power that brings in the days and the seasons with benign and undisturbed regularity.

It takes but a short time to create a “new heaven and a new earth” out of such a little

chaos—a new regime of neatness, quiet, and punctuality that enables the teacher at five or ten minutes past nine to view his little charge silently at its individual tasks.

You demand that everything be in readiness. Desks in order, books arranged, pencils sharpened, hair combed, hands washed, thirst assuaged—everything in readiness for taking up the work of the session; and, when this condition has been attained, there is nothing under the sun left to do after the opening exercises but to go to work.

Boys and girls are not infallible, neither is it to be expected that they will always be thoughtful, and, as one does not wish to seem unreasonable and may even desire to be indulgent, I have found that a warning bell rung five or ten minutes before the final call is an excellent means of reminding all of duties unperformed, while it removes often the necessity of speaking, and leaves no possible excuse for the pupils' not being prepared for work at the proper time.

Perfection in any condition will ever remain an ideal, yet it is worthy of a persistent attempt at attainment. There will always be the boy or the girl who dislikes school, and is forever tardy; there will ever be the innocently forgetful to deprive whom of some prized pleasure will bring tears to your own eyes; there will ever be the persistent one who spends the largest part of the time inventing excuses for breaking in

on the regular order ; but, by witchcraft (I have grave doubts about the value of switchcraft at any time), you may get these discordant elements harmonized—inspired with your own zeal for the general good, and make of them aids instead of hindrances in your plan, plea, and progress for good order.

There will ever be lots of little things to keep the school-house about seven doors below Paradise ; but with the good Persian, you can walk the bridge Chinvat, which is said to be a hair in width, and ever strive with the Divs and the Jinns of disorder for the peace of your soul.

IV

CLASSES AND DIVISIONS

IN ungraded country schools, the problem of keeping down the number of classes and of arranging divisions is one that gives the teacher no little trouble and anxiety.

The country school, offering unrestrained an opportunity for the individuality of the teacher and the individualities of the pupils as well, is likely, in the matter of classes and divisions, to assume a kaleidoscopic character,—ever changing in relation to the punctuality, ability, and application or energy of the various pupils.

In a graded school, where the teacher is a part of a mechanism that turns off so many pages in so many days, regardless of the fact that some pupils are overworking at the same task that others find mere play, regardless of the fact that the slow ones are constantly discouraged and the bright ones are forming habits of listlessness, there is no room left for the exercise of the discretion with which the rural educator attempts to harmonize these inequalities and to reconcile many an inconsistency. The smaller the school and the closer the contact of teacher and pupil, the more complex becomes the problem, until, in some

instances, classes cease to exist altogether in many of the more difficult studies.

While we can not find it in our hearts to retard the progress of some exceptionally bright pupils we should not forget to stir the exceptionally dull ones to greater effort to keep pace, and even then we can scarcely avoid a division of the class which must inevitably come. At this point, when it is reached, to avoid multiplying classes, I have dropped the slower pupils into the brighter division of the class in the next lower grade,—in fact, to preserve harmony in the homes and in school, have made this measure an apparent elevation of the brilliants into a higher grade.

Complicating the problem in rural schools is the diversity of text-books, rendering special lessons necessary. After determining the grading and finding many different books in some one class, I have found that to teach without a book was a course that, while it necessitated some extra preparation, obviated the necessity for separate recitations.

To develop a recitation and not have it a mere fact-mill for a two, three, or five minutes revolution turning out dust and ashes, one must have time, and to get time a reduction of the number of classes and an increase of general exercises,—lessons in which the greater part of the pupils can join,—should be made.

With forty classes, with varying text-

books, inequalities in age, attainment, and ability, and with special subjects asked and needed by special pupils, — with forty classes, or thirty classes to manage, what justice can be done to any one of them, or to any individual in any one of them? With a doubling up of some of the classes, with a combination of correlated subjects, with a discarding of some extras that could not be continued, with a revolution that deposed some old, cherished methods from the throne beneath the popular dome of thought, I was not spared the consequences of my ignorance and mismanagement, and closed my first year of teaching with twenty classes and a case of fever that made me a better student of economy,—school and physical economy combined.

I think we should not deny ourselves the privilege, which is a duty, with the liberty we have in this country, of advancing as far as possible the brighter pupils, nor do I think we should deny ourselves the pleasure of stimulating and gratifying some natural talent of some thoughtful lad or lass with a special subject outside of the ordinary curriculum, provided we can find the time for it. The country teacher has an added responsibility not so strongly felt by the city teacher. The main burden on the mind of the average urban teacher is the passing of a certain percentage of her grade for promotion, knowing that the greater need of her pupils will be supplied

in the order of their ascent toward graduation; but the rural teacher is handling all grades, and, if true to her trust, is ever yearning to awaken the spirit that is like the electric flash to the mingled but unseen gases, unrealized, uncentred, and uncontrolled powers, that it unites into a crystal drop reflecting the universe and dazzling with a brilliance more to be desired and beyond that of the diamond. The country teacher has the responsibility of awakening and centering the powers and ambitions of "the great minds, brave hearts, strong and willing hands an age like this demands," and this responsibility must not be shirked or neglected.

There is a class of pupils, the irregular ones, who multiply classes and perplexities. They are a class to which I have shown few favors, unless the pupils were unfortunately kept out of school by necessity. That being the case, they received every attention I could possibly bestow when they were able to attend. Irregularity is usually the fault of the parents, and if they do not have more interest in the future of their children than to allow them to ignore advantages, I do not believe it is the teacher's duty to retard the progress of others for their benefit.

If you become wise unto your own salvation and institute a new order, make use of every available time-saving method. You may fear the loss of popular favor;

but duty to yourself and to your school may demand such a sacrifice, which will be lighter than you imagine. In fact, a gain in favor will be made if methods intelligently applied bring, as they will, results to be desired. Find comfort in Schiller's thought, as favor is accorded: "If by your art you cannot please all, content the few. To please the multitude is bad." Among "the few" count yourself the first to be contented.

V

KEEPING PUPILS BUSY

THE inexperienced teacher, tho "to the manor born,"—tho thoroly qualified educationally,—tho zealous and conscientious, will puzzle over the spirit of unrest, of listlessness, of consummate deviltry that again and again will pervade the school-room to paralyze endeavor and create disorder. Often, in such cases, by the exercise of a little ingenuity, or thru a knowledge of common helps at hand or easily accessible, the strain on nerves could be relaxed by occupying the wandering or exuberant energy with novel and educating tasks.

I assume that we all realize the bearing on good order and good work that is had by a judicious seating of the pupils. If our seating is not done with reference to the natures, temperaments, and discovered habits, which we desire, in a measure, to balance by bringing, so far as we can, opposites into correcting contact, we might plan to have all of our work "busy work" and then fail of attaining the object at which we are aiming.

I assume also that we have our higher grades so interested in the "business" of

school that we are seldom, if ever, forced to resort to pedagogical "sleight-of-hand" to lure them back into the path of rectitude.

With my older boys and girls, I have seldom had much occasion to consider the question, aside from regular tasks presenting sufficient variety in the course of progress to keep them "busy." But occasionally I have had pupils who were extraordinary and very active, and have succeeded with history and historical romance in keeping them interested and occupied in moments that without such helps would have been spent in idleness. While I had no regularly appointed reading table, such as has been successfully used by many teachers and is to be recommended, I always had a large number of magazines and the better class of papers which served a good purpose for those able to make use of them in unoccupied periods.

The nature of "busy work" in the lower grades must be carefully studied. In fact, the teacher, like the chess player, should make no move for which he cannot clearly give good reasons. He should aim to have this "busy" work bear on the evolution,—the education, of the child mind. Anything that will lead pupils to think while keeping their attention and occupying their hands; anything that will lead to a cultivation of the senses, quickening sight, touch, smell, taste; anything developing ingenuity and an exercise of the powers of observa-

tion and expression is permissible and only advisable. But anything done without a method under the seeming "madness"—as much of this play with sticks, pictures and color and letter cards would be called in rural districts,—anything done merely to kill and not beneficially to fill time, would better be left undone, as it would tend to shatter the powers which it is desired to strengthen and concentrate.

It is not permitted me here to go into detail regarding helps or apparatus for "busy work." There are many excellent works published on the subject and much assistance will be found in the pages of *TEACHERS MAGAZINE*, where also stimulus to individual and original invention will be found. Let me say that it is not necessary to have expensive paraphernalia, for good results can be gotten from a bundle of twigs or a handful of pebbles gathered on the school grounds. If helps are not at hand the resourceful teacher will not be long without substitutes improvised from materials available. Let us strive for adaptability and the fullest development of intelligence.

The true artist takes a little pigment, a brush, and a stretcher of canvas, and, after a little, rounds out an object of beauty that is pleasant to contemplate. The savage potentate would knock a hole in the canvas, wear the stretcher around his neck, stick the brush thru his nose, plaster the pigment

on his person and make himself superlatively ridiculous with the misused materials. Let us strive to be artists.

VI

RECESSES

THE need of a recess in the middle of a session or the lack of it, is something of an indication of the quality of the teaching in a school. If the teacher be an old-fashioned routinist, a dull and prosy parrot trainer, his little polliwogs will get tired of repeating their want of a cracker, and then the ten or fifteen minutes of relaxation will be found to be an absolute necessity. But, on the other hand, if the teacher is wide awake and up-to-date and makes every moment of the session interesting, little need of the intermission will be found, as the recreation that comes of a change of occupation will be continuously enjoyed. Under such a teacher the "rush" at recess is not a "storming out to play," but is a gathering about the teacher's desk to glean more of that which has been dropped during the period, or a grouping of classes for a comparison of notes, so that nothing of that in which the interest has been centered may be lost.

In many of the rural districts it would be an unpardonable heresy for the teacher to discontinue recesses. I, therefore, never

left the regulation allotment of playtime off the schedule, but left the matter to be decided by a vote of the school; and, happily, almost invariably a large majority decided to continue sessions without intermissions. In a way, I have measured my influence and usefulness in a school by this delicate but unmistakable barometer, the popular will.

In winter, when country schools are the largest, I seldom had more than a brief breathing moment when the school-room was thrown open for needed ventilation and as quickly closed for a resumption of work. When the season changed, and the weather became milder, and the school reduced to an attendance of the younger children, the recesses became longer and more regularly an institution, and on very warm or very fine days often a full fifteen minutes' allowance was given.

As in the country very young children are sent to school to remain there all day, to relieve them of inevitable weariness, I gave them frequent and lengthy play spells out of doors when the weather permitted, allowing them their own will as to when they should return. I seldom had to call them; for, tiring of play, or curious to know what was going on in the school-room, they would steal quietly in and up to their seats, and surprise me by being there, where I had not expected them, when wanted for an exercise.

When I first began teaching, I was prim enough and foolish enough to imagine that boys and girls should not be allowed to have recesses together, and consequently deprived myself of the aiding corrective that resides in a mingling of the sexes, and had a sterner struggle to keep the order and morale of the school at par. Of course, circumstances may sometimes be such that it would be better to have separate recesses, but they are a nuisance and a relic of that barbarism that excluded women from male assemblages,—perhaps wisely in the middle ages, because the action and the conversation of the Launcelots and Galahads were far from fit to be witnessed by the Vivians and the Guiniveres. Happily a higher chivalry has been developed, with a loftier conception and a more earnest and intelligent quest of the Grail, than was possessed by the knights who reveled at the round table.

Any privilege or any usage in school management should be considered in its relation to the physical, mental, and moral well-being of the pupils; and in the matter of recesses, in my mind, they are only advisable when the pupils have been prepared to make the best use of them. In spring, summer, or autumn, if your boys and girls use the few moments in wildly rushing themselves into a heat and excitement that require an hour to reduce to normal temperature and calm, then recesses are more of

a detriment than a benefit, and regardless of prejudice I should discontinue the liberty until I could educate the pupils in a proper use of play time and up to an appreciation of the privilege. It would be vastly better in winter for the pupils to remain in the school-room if they know no better than to deliberately wet their feet, or if they snowball until half frozen and have to spend an hour perched about the stove drying and warming, or, escaping notice, have to sit thru the remainder of the session uncomfortable, with their health in jeopardy, and unfitted to carry on the work which is the main object of their presence at school. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, indeed; but if in any way Jack's play impairs his capability for work, it is better that he run the risk of becoming dull.

For weeks together my recesses were momentary affairs for ventilation, to avoid the "Please-may-I-go-out?" nuisance, and the forming of the terrible and contagious drink habit, and for a brief and rapid preparation for the work to be continued; and this was not in obedience to the ukase of despotism, but in submission, as has been intimated, to *vox populi* in a little government whose motto was *Pro Bono Publico*.

VII

UNIFYING THE SCHOOL

IN every country community there are more "sets" than sects;—in truth, there are usually several sets in each sect, and am sorry to say it, but it is true, each "set" secretly carries a chip on its shoulder for all of the others. Yet there is occasion for hope, for all kneel on the Sabbath and with one accord beseech deliverance from "envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness," and implore forgiveness for their "enemies, persecutors, and slanderers." There is usually no open hostility among the factions, and the casual observer would declare the community to be in a state of idyllic calm and accord; but the doctor and the school-master know only too well that this calm is the calm before a possible storm,—the strained stillness of an armed neutrality, whose masked batteries are manned (should I have said "womaned"?) and ready for terrific and pitiless carnage at a moment's notice. Like parents, like pupils. Mrs. Jones barely nods to Mrs. Brown in public, and in private they criticise and condemn each other without mercy.

Their children, lacking, thank heaven! the "discretion" of the parents, fight openly, or openly refuse to associate.

There is one in town with the scar of an indiscretion as much in evidence as tho she wore Hester Prynne's scarlet letter on her breast. Her fatherless child goes to school,—an innocent boy, and such was the King of Kings,—and the school becomes Sanhedrim and Roman tribunal in one and would crucify him. The children of the rich mill owner and the children of the farmer wear better clothes and have better lunches than the other children and also have not a little money to spend at the store for sweets. With a following of sycophants, they form a "set" and become as important and as supercilious as it is possible to become, even tho unstimulated in this direction by home example and influence. The editor's, the lawyer's, and the minister's boys and girls form the brainy "set" and put on airs accordingly, and from necessity of self-protection, the poor and the dull boys and girls ally themselves to one or another of the dominant factions or become tribes or individual representatives of the house of Ishmael. Without going farther we have factors enough for a problem of "unification" that is as difficult to solve as is the one you give the "smart" boy on the relation between the cost of a jackknife and the number of cubic feet in a brush heap; and if, like the lad, we are unable to solve it, we

in the end will be made to feel as cheap as he.

We have the factors, but where are the parentheses for uniting them in one,—we have the elements, but how shall we combine them in one smooth, homogenous fluid, in which each will have lost its peculiar unpleasant property and will have gained in the mingling an added quality of strength for the mellifluous liquid,—a harmonious and united school?

Several years ago, I was called to a neighborhood that had been in a state of internecine discord for over twenty years. I was told that I would not stay there six months, as many an older and more experienced teacher had won only the title “yearling” in the ungracious community. I found on getting acquainted that the people were not as bad as they had been pictured,—that they were an average aggregation with the aims and interests and ideals usual to dwellers in isolated localities, but that, for some forgotten reason of offense or injury, every man’s hand was against every other man’s, and neighborliness and the graces of kindness and good will that make life in the country endurable were unknown. I found there were about as many feuds as there were families, and that Killkenny kittens were the products of this condition, and with them I had to deal. I began with a strict impartiality, making as much of one as of another, and said not

a word to anyone about anybody. I did not recognize that discord existed, and innocently (?) devised plans that took the children of one family into the home of another. By constant care and watchfulness that thwarted any attempt at meanness on the part of one youthful coterie to another, and by joining in and directing many things of a social nature among the older boys and girls, they came to forget, in my constant example and earnest teaching on the topic, that one was not as good as another, and to learn that spiteful bickerings were unprofitable and prevented the enjoyment of the pleasure and profit to be obtained thru a community of interests and action. I could reach the community only thru the children, as I could not call on all and therefore called on none; but I was assisted in an unexpected way by a young evangelist, who, happily, organized a society of the undenominational Christian Endeavor, and this soon worked in the home what I was working in the school, and I am told that to this day there is no hurt or destruction in that little rural mount,—that the lion and the lamb still lie down together.

I taught lessons of a practical broadness that made any smallness or meanness seem beneath the boys and girls. I taught a charity that overlooks defects of body or of character,—that inspires pity for and tenderness toward the unfortunate and

gives birth to the desire to help better by kindness and consideration the condition of all with whom daily contact is a necessity. I taught Ruskin, and, tho unworthy, I taught Christ; and of the four years that I taught in that community, I had three years and more of a harmony that in many of its resolutions was satisfying to the soul thru sights seen and sounds heard. Every discord but one was a "discord of the seventh" that added strength and beauty to the symphony of the years.

Need I add, in closing, that the teacher must infuse himself into his school, his community, in uniting factions,—need I add that it is love, divine love, that is just as well as merciful, that alone is able to unite antagonisms in such a manner that each loses its disagreeable elements?

VIII

PARENTAL CO-OPERATION

WITHOUT support in the home, the few hours of influence in the school will scarcely suffice to counteract the many hours of relaxed discipline outside. "We plan for our powers the divinest we can,—we do with our powers the supremest we may," and then are discouraged because we do not succeed,—because there is a counter current of opposition,—an eddy unseen, that snatches success out of the swift flow of our zeal and delays it in idle circlings until we are in despair.

To keep your school together, proving that you are master of the situation, overriding opposition, superior to fear and not to be bribed by favor, is a very difficult task to accomplish gracefully, the while you are striving to keep free from bitterness toward betrayers and attempting to win their esteem.

"There are two ways to victory," says Thoreau, "to strive, or to yield;" and while it is not in exact harmony with the meaning of the hermit of Malden Pond, yet, in these days, many teachers are holding their positions seemingly in great favor thru yield-

ing to the caprices of their pupils, knowing that the children are the rulers in many of the homes. But what becomes of conscience and that happiness which is the true reward of duty well done,—what, when this tide of false popularity turns, as it surely will? There is another way of yielding,—probably the one intended by the great naturalist,—expressed by Espinoza: “He who lives according to reason, endeavors to the utmost of his powers to outweigh another man’s hate, anger, or despite against him with love or high-mindedness. He who chooses to avenge wrong by requiting it with hatred, is assuredly miserable. But he who strives to cast out hatred by love, may fight his fight in joy and confidence. As for those he doth conquer, they yield to him joyfully, and that not because their strength faileth, but because it is increased.”

In every community there are people who look upon the teacher as the natural enemy of their children and vigorously uphold them in any misdemeanor or impudence, and listen raptly to the wildest misrepresentations. Tho having repeatedly punished unmercifully their children for mischief and falsifying, they inconsistently deny the teacher the exercise of even the mildest forms of corrective. We all know that the average child is a little angel; but we also have a misty reminiscence of the early days of Lucifer. There are the peo-

ple who do not think it necessary for their children to attend school regularly, and who think that punctuality is far from being an absolute necessity. There are those who neglect, day after day, to provide proper books for their children,—there are those who wanted some other teacher hired and are trying their very best to make life as nearly unbearable for the present incumbent as they can; and, thank goodness! there are those who, if he deserves it, stand at the teacher's back thru thick and thin, and without whom in many instances life would be almost unbearable. This latter class are among the old-fashioned folk who believe that children should be seen and not heard at all times,—who believe in having not only the respect, but also the love and confidence of their children,—who see that their children keep good company and are at home after nightfall,—who know how lessons have been learned and recited at school thru daily interest in school work, who discourage tale-bearing with its fungi of exaggeration, and who strive in every way to aid instead of to multiply the cares of the instructor.

How to gain the co-operation of the opposition and still retain dignity, self-respect, and supreme control is the problem. Some teachers yield, but not in the manner first instanced at the outset of this brief talk, but, apparently, by not declaring

open war. Thru firmness and the exercise of inherent qualities of attraction, they finally draw unto themselves a following that is productive of books for the bookless, of notes of explanation and apology for detained pupils, of demands for severe correction for the obstreperous, of bouquets for the desk, and of invitations that turn life from funeral marches to the grave into an endless procession of triumph in which, so to speak, each former enemy is at the teacher's chariot tail, so scorched are they in mind by the particular brand of coals that have been heaped upon their heads.

Love and patience are virtues only up to a certain point, and when they have been exhausted they are vices, weakening and degrading. Open war is sometimes inevitable, and what cannot be gained thru universal and uniform courtesy,—thru warm-hearted interest in pupils and parents,—thru evident good fellowship and ever apparent sincerity and ability, can often be gained by a bold stand on dignity and authority,—by an exhibition of the righteous wrath that drove the desecrators from the temple and that restored the peace and the sanctity that had been profaned. A friend of mine, who had traveled in the west in the days of the gold fever and who had seen a deal of rough life, used to say: "Never argue with a drunken man; if he insults you, knock him down,—it will sober him into a repentance for the meanness he

felt toward you and didn't dare perpetrate when he was sober." People drunken with envy, hatred, or conceit need knock down arguments often to insure you from immunity from insult.

The principle to be maintained is the kind of dignity most admired in your community. Attempt to satisfy the people thoroly that you are first competent and then kind,—that you wish to be friendly with everybody,—that you are not a prig or a snob, but a good fellow,—that your interests are the interests of the community, and that you are willing to go more than half way to be friendly and helpful; and, somehow, the obstruction sand and gravel will work out of life's little stream, and you will glide on to a degree of success that will be gratifying and compensating.

IX

ASSISTANCE FROM PUPILS

WHEN I was a lad, I attended a school in which I was one of the teachers and in which nearly all of the "big boys" and "big girls" took turns in running things. The neighborhood did not appreciate our efforts, however kindly put forth, and when the term closed, our master was gathered unto his predecessors and another ruled in his stead. Remembering this when I came to teach, only when closely pressed for time and for some easily-managed recitation, did I ever call on my older pupils for assistance, and I have had many that have made good teachers and who are to-day in the profession, which they are ornamenting.

In each school where I have been, I have been so fortunate as to have among the pupils one or more of those large-hearted, womanly girls,—the material from which good mothers are made,—who shared with me the respect of all, and who quietly gathered the little ones under her wings, and with the softening, soothing influence that only a good woman can exert, has smoothed the rough places, made the crooked paths straight, and has driven away the showers

by the sunlight of her presence. Having the affection of the wayward, to whom her example is a corrective, she is a valuable aid and worthy of confidence and every privilege that can be granted. She is the girl to whom you can safely send the little and even the larger folk for a recitation when time presses. Do not let the interest and pleasure manifested by your pupils under her ministration make you jealous, for she merits a nobler sentiment. We all know this girl, but do we all make the developing use of her that we could and should? Do we strengthen her, or do we estrange?

How many of us have a secret service bureau? How many of us have the discretion and the self-control necessary for making a service "secret" and effective; and how many of us have the tact necessary for properly using boys and girls as detectives without letting them know they are youthful Pinkertons? Do you make a handle of tattling? If you do, you encourage a spirit that makes liars of your pupils and will make you distrusted and disrespected by everybody. Haven't you had boys and girls in whom you confided, with whom you held confidential conversations about the school and the pupils, who gave you, if you have the art of hearing words between words, "pointers" about things of which you never dreamed and which forewarned you of threatened dis-

orders or enabled you to correct abuses that had existed without your knowledge? In a word, are you "one of the boys"—one of the girls,—yourself, while being the cautious and watchful teacher almost unconsciously underneath? If you are, then you are the chief of a secret service bureau, who will often surprise the school and the community by courses of action that will show that you "know what is in the wind" and will win the "well done" of the gods of the rural community expressed in the words, "He was up to snuff."

I have always made it a point to study the special talents or bents of my pupils and to elevate (?) them to "positions of trust and responsibility" for which they seemed best fitted for the good of our little school commune. Some of my girls have been musical. Such played the organ or the piano for marching and for opening and other exercises, and diversified our daily program with solos and duos on invitation or vote of the school. Some of my boys have been mechanical in turn, and such have been allowed to do odd jobs of tinkering, or make some simple device or apparatus needed for some lesson.

One of my boys in a certain school was a natural-born artist. By universal consent, he had control of one blackboard, and never less than three times a week he spent a part of the noon hour in materializing his ideas in various colors. As an instance:

One day I came in, and there was the then celebrated locomotive "999," with coaches attached ready to steam out of the Grand Central station on her flight to Buffalo. Here was a chance for an interesting lesson not to be lost, as the children seldom saw a locomotive, being miles from any railroad. On the birthdays we celebrated, he would reproduce portraits and views in connection with them with marvelous skill, and in these ways made himself a valuable and a valued ally. Three times a week I counted on his aid for some subject for a brief opening lesson; and he, being of an earnest and thoughtful nature, and a thoroly good boy, I seldom made a suggestion for his work, or put any condition of restraint upon his efforts. I kept a list of subjects from which to conduct an occasional review. Perhaps it would have been better to have guided this boy's efforts into a connected series; but I felt that his genius was spontaneous, and that the element of novelty in each surprise in this lack of system was better, because it gave the task of developing the lesson he set for us an interest of the extemporaneous, inspiring both teacher and pupil to their best effort.

Do your pupils do jury duty? You may not be aware of it, but they do settle every case that comes before the pedagogical tribunal, and try not only the culprit, but the judge and executor of the court's decrees, and woe to the one or to the other if

anger instead of due mercy tempers justice, if the tyrant instead of the teacher pronounces the sentence and inflicts the penalty! Knowing this, I have used my pupils as a bench of judges for trying cases, allowing a discussion of the crime (?) and for fixing the proper degree and the nature of the expiation to be demanded; and I found strength in adapting our civics lessons to the government of our little republic.

I have always had a ministry or cabinet composed of my better, more intelligent pupils with whom I have discussed school polity and considered plans; and thus have won a co-operation and assistance that could have been gained in no other way, and without for one moment degrading my dignity or losing the essential leadership and control.

X

JOURNALISM IN A DISTRICT SCHOOL

THE idea of a school paper, or review, is not a new one. This class of periodical usually has for its object the preservation of class gossip, or outlines the work and relates the occurrences of the school community of which it is the mouthpiece. But *The Maple Grove Gazette*, of which I shall speak briefly, was a semi-monthly newspaper having for its editors and reporters the school children of an isolated country district. The only part I took in the affair was that of censor-manager, thoroughly believing in the wisdom of the French in instituting such an office, provided, of course, its privileges are not abused.

I secured as editor-in-chief a girl of sixteen who had displayed much good taste in the selection of her reading, and whose efforts in composition had clearly indicated a desire for saying the most in the fewest words. There were others in the school who had livelier fancies in producing, but I felt they were not to be implicitly trusted to keep the erratic staff within bounds and to enforce rigidly the rules of purity, per-

spicacity, and propriety, on whose strict observance we insisted.

The editor carefully perused the pile of papers I kept on my desk, among which was *Our Times*, on whose columns of condensed matter tremendous onslaughts were made with the shears. *The Scientific American*, *Harper's Weekly*, *The Youth's Companion*, *St. Nicholas*, *The Ladies' Home Journal*, *The American Agriculturist*, *The Country Gentleman*, and *Good Housekeeping*, to say nothing of local and other minor publication too numerous to mention, were the mines from which the boys and girls in their homes drew forth treasure and gems for our bi-monthly enrichment.

At recess, if we were having recesses, or at noon and after school, the editor would confer with her staff, and one or another would gravely discuss with her the chances this matter or that would have of being generally interesting or profitable to the subscribers, as they fancifully termed the pupils of the school.

One week would be devoted to this sort of preparation, and then the editor would make out a table of contents for the next issue, and on my approval the subjects would be assigned to the several assistants. No article was allowed to be copied. It had to be rewritten from memory, after its main features had been assimilated by a careful reading, and had to be expressed in the pupil's own language.

Others would be detailed to gather brief news items of the immediate vicinity; and here the utmost care had to be exercised, for gossip of the petty, rural sort would often creep in, and this had to be suppressed, or our paper and our school would have gone to pieces in a hurry. I think in this one department a most valuable work was done; for boys and girls were taught, as they could be most easily, their duty to their neighbor in a practical application of the Golden Rule, that is the one essential element in producing harmony in a country community.

Boys and girls are not devoid of a sense of humor, by any means, and early efforts at being funny in the paper were rather painful. Without the clearer discrimination and taste that come with culture, a coarseness pervaded their fun that was inexcusable. This again offered a sure means of elevation morally and intellectually, for expurgation and the reason for it soon taught that nothing should be amusing that contains the slightest *double entente*, or that is rough and impure in expression.

When the telegraph editor had culled the most important news from his "ticker," a New York semi-weekly,—when the poetry editor had clipped or copied those verses that had appealed to his growing appreciation of beauty,—when all of the various departments had fulfilled their functions, then the chief took the mass of manuscript

in hand and went through it carefully to note, mark, and make suggestions for eliminations and corrections, and I have had the pleasure of having whole stanzas of my own verse, published annonymously, crossed out by the inexorable blue pencil in the hands of the clear-eyed girl, who, unconscious of the author's identity, asked him if he didn't think the lines were somewhat superfluous, when we together went through the work for a final examination.

On Friday afternoon, the items of the issue having been arranged, under their departmental headings, the editor would read the aggregation to the school, each member of which was eager to hear what the others had written, and an interest grew that incited a rivalry as to who could find and best re-write the most interesting matter.

At first, criticism had to be mildly given, but soon open discussion of the work could be tolerated, and, properly governed, made profitable, if not at all times logical and influenced by a full knowledge of the finer proprieties.

An advertising department had early to be discontinued, as the fertility of the youthful imagination knew no bounds regarding property to be sold or exchanged and regarding situations wanted.

The venture was a success from its first issue to its last, and it had an influence on each subscriber far greater than any other

periodical in the land, because each subscriber was a contributor, not receiving education so much through its columns as through the reflection of what he put there himself, and by far the greatest benefit from what he was not allowed to publish.

In the latter part of the year much original work was approved and used, and one story from the lowly sheet found its way into *The Teachers' Institute*, the predecessor of *Teachers' Magazine*, to be reproduced, doubtless, by thousands of little folk throughout the land. No one knows how many well written items for the local county papers and the farm papers can be accredited to the influence and training of the *Maple Grove Gazette*.

Its editor is a married woman; its contributors are scattered far and wide; its manuscript pages, like those of "The Ephemeris" of Pompeii, are ashes; the visible evidences of its being have been destroyed. But, as none can tell to what extent its ashes have beautified the plant life into which they have inevitably found their way, so none can estimate the broadening tendency to beautiful ideas and usefulness the conscientious occupation of a few leisure hours of that year may have effected. Certainly I have never used an extra exercise that gave me less labor and more pleasure, and that I felt was more freighted with future possibilities than the bi-monthly preparation and discussion of *The Maple Grove Gazette*.

XI

CHARACTER IN HIDING

A BACKWARD glance to early education, in the contemplation of its results in the characters of the men about us, might often prove beneficial to many of us who, in our zeal, often feel that the essence of our best effort has been dissipated and lost.

I am an admirer of a certain young mechanic of my acquaintance,—of his intense feeling of moral obligation as a citizen, and of his strong sentiment of spiritual responsibility. His present development has often been a matter for wonder to me; for, from early life, he has been thrown into associations that have wrecked thousands. It was all clear to me the other day, however, when I stepped into his shop, unnoticed, and found him talking to himself.

What was he saying? Was it a passage from a book he was then reading in leisure hours? Was it a section of the "Insurance Bill" in which he was deeply interested?

No: it was the concluding line of a temperance poem in one of the old "Sanders" school readers.

Finishing, he turned, and, beholding me, exclaimed: "Ah. Saunders, listening to my

declamation, eh? Well, I didn't think you would turn eavesdropper." Continuing, he said: "Do you know, all of the pieces in my old reading books come back to me, as I work here at the bench?"

"There's 'The Rapids Are Before You' and 'The Little Boy That Died,' and the old fables and proverbs, and a host of things I never understood at school whose meaning comes now in a flash.

"Say, I don't believe you teachers pay enough attention to reading. Now, I'll tell you what I mean. You don't explain the lesson as carefully as you ought,—that is, they didn't, when I went to school.

"I was a first-rate reader: could call all of the words and mind the punctuation; but I didn't know anything about what I was reading. I was always wondering about the meaning of the combination of words, and only after I left school did the ideas take definite form."

We talked over many selections familiar to both, and I left him, wondering at the solid structure the old fellows had so carelessly built, and wondering if the effort we are expending on the reading lesson,—on every lesson,—would be rewarded in proportion. I am a rational optimist.

When we come to consider that the reading lesson is the first to be impressed, that first impressions last a life-time, and that this lesson is the most laboriously wrought and the most frequently repeated by the

pupil, does it not seem most worthy of careful study, from the selection of a text-book to the preparation of the lesson?

When the Shah-Jehan wished to build a shrine to the memory of Noor-Jehan, "The Light of the World," he sought out the best Spanish architect of the Seventeenth Century.

The builder went to India, displayed his design, built the foundation, and then disappeared. For seven long years the prince sought the missing architect in vain, and then one day he reappeared and finished his work.

To-day, on the marshy banks of the Jumna, stands a glimpse of heaven without a flaw, because the foundation had time to settle in the soft soil before the weight of the Taj-Mahal was superimposed.

Do we burden the plastic mind with finely wrought casuistry?

Let us select our readers for the lessons that will give a firm foundation, and then wait until the child mind can sustain the larger analysis,—the column and the intricate arabesque of the design that we have set so high as an ideal.

XII

OUR GLORIOUS HERITAGE

At any season of the year a contemplation of nature will be amply rewarded, but in Spring the varying tints that clothe hill and vale inspire in their tenderness those emotions that prove our kinship to the divine and those thoughts of beauty that are the voices of divinities within. The most stolid and illiterate appreciate and grope for the words to express that which is stirring in the unexplored recesses of their souls, and, lost in the labyrinth of the manifold, the anthem of their silent adoration mingles with the incense from a million buds, that sweetly, tho invisibly, arises to caress the mighty groins of the temple arch sprung so sublimely overhead.

The man of culture is somewhat removed from this mere sensual appeal, for he has the power of knowledge which makes him master of this heritage, accumulated and enriched by the heroic struggle of the ages; and, in the enjoyment of his sacred birth-right, his soul is broadened to that god-like philanthropy which embraced the children and demanded their development in His name.

It is this sentiment that has provided a breath of fresh air for thousands of stifled little ones, but more than this all children need. The "Complex Chinese toy" that inspires wonder, but only a degree of joy, in the unopened mind of city or of country child, must be taken apart and carried piece by piece into the dim recesses of the little brain, until mere wonder and admiration are supplanted by the pure delight the Creator must feel in knowing how the "toy" was fashioned, and, finished, made to go.

Take the boys and girls into the country, where at every step an object appears for an impressive lesson. Let them breathe the ozone tintured by the breath of hemlock and of pine. Let them pluck the anemone and hunt the arbutus. But surprise them with a feast of beauties underlying all of these.

The season belongs to the children, and they have an inalienable right to all of its treasures; and we, who have reveled in these riches, will be greatly enriched in sharing them.

The saddest thought of the season to me is that so many country children seem utterly oblivious to their surroundings, and I never enter a school-room without feeling that I should attempt to arouse the children to an appreciation of the grace and beauty by which they are encompassed in every moment of their freedom out of doors.

City children long for the beauties and

the privileges of the country, and the need to-day is the awakening of the country child to the glories and advantages of his environment.

In these buds of future men and women are the possibilities of a rich and rewarding harvest. Awaken them; warm them; show them the wonders of the long past of preparation for the kingdom they inherit with the flowers; and point them to a material progress, as well as to a progress beyond that of the finite plant, flower, and fruit,—that progress in the evolution of the manifold that will not cease even when man unfolds, an amaranthine blossom for the adornment of an eternal destiny.

XIII

EDUCATION FOR USEFULNESS

THE need of the rural districts in education is immediate, and the call is insistent and should be at once answered intelligently, if agriculture is to be re-established as a foundation of our national importance and if rural districts are to be repopulated.

The attractiveness of those occupations which pay large rewards for intelligence has lured the boys and the girls, generation after generation, to the cities, until in the East over 70 per cent. of the population is crowded into the towns and less than 30 per cent. is left to lonesome living in districts more than half depopulated.

There is no reason why agriculture intelligently pursued,—pursued in the light of modern discoveries, with modern implements, after modern methods, and with sectional limitations and modern market needs in view,—should not pay as large, or larger, returns than the average small business in the city, or the average professional occupation. In every instance, an agricultural specialty intelligently followed will be far better rewarded than any clerkship in any city.

For long years past, teachers and foolish parents have held up a false picture to the youth of the country. They have dilated on the country boy who has gone to the great city and has become a great lawyer, a great physician, musician, merchant prince, or a captain of finance, forgetful of the fact that few country boys from the great mass have reached a point where they have become noticeable, still fewer are high in finance, and none are in "high" finance whose characters would exalt them as models for emulation. Teachers have let the glamor of the limelight fall on the isolated cases of the country boy who has made a hit in the city, while all around the small disc of light upon the curtain, but hidden in the contrasted intensity of darkness and obscurity, are the thousands and tens of thousands of country boys and girls who have gone to the city and have met nothing but hardship, disappointment, and failure, to say nothing of fates more dismal, distressing, or disgraceful.

The time has come in rural education to show both sides of the city: its East side as well as its West,—its First avenue as well as its Fifth. The time has come for the tidal wave that has so long flowed cityward to be reflected from the congested cañons of commerce and to flow more calmly back toward the wellsprings from which its particles were drawn.

The need, then, in rural education is a

school properly equipped and having a trained, conscientious, and discriminating teacher,—a school in which every human relation is placed in its proper position and shown in its actual proportion,—a school in which the beauty and sublimity of nature shall be given prominence, and in which the dignity, attractiveness, and profit of rural occupations shall be given their proper value,—a school in which the child is taught the practical things of life; is taught something of the principles of government and of successful agriculture, the foundation of all national prosperity.

I do not mean that a desire for higher education should be stifled, but, on the contrary, as I have urged elsewhere, it should be stimulated, but not by false ideals,—by firing the youthful imagination with false views of human greatness in artificial lines, leading to the erection of false hopes and the cherishing of idle dreams that lead too often to dissatisfaction, despair, and flat failure.

How often you have heard it remarked of a college graduate who has failed to connect with some useful occupation: "There goes a five thousand dollar education wasted on a fifty cent man." The fact is, that there goes a most useful citizen side-tracked by false conceptions of what spells success and by improperly formed ideals, influenced in the formative period by unwise instructors or foolishly ambitious

parents. The five thousand dollar education is all right, and the man is infinitely better off in possessing it, but the pity is that in getting it he did not spend some time in studying how to make practical use of it.

This is what is being aimed at by the Education Department of New York State in introducing civics and agriculture and nature study into the course of instruction for common schools. It is a step in the right direction, toward the need of the rural communities, and is one that, if followed out by the teachers and supported by the district organizations, will have its influence in making the country and its life and occupations attractive to the boys and girls and will eventually increase the rural population, improve farm values and the value of farm products, and, above all, the value and enjoyment of the inhabitants of rural communities in which are found the men and women who right the wrongs and maintain the tone of the nation, in which too often false standards have been followed toward apparent disaster.

It is back to nature we must hark; back to contact with the soil; back to the simple life, the standards and the high purposes of the founders of the republic; back to truth and an honest strife for a true wealth that will represent a true prosperity. And on the teachers is the burden of inaugurating the era of renewal. It is a worthy trust, a noble and ennobling opportunity.

XIV

HOME LESSONS

WITH your classes reduced to the smallest possible number, you have gained the great advantage of a larger allotment of time for each recitation, but at the outset you will be checked in the ampler devotion by the knowledge that you are encroaching on time which should be spent in study. You are a college or normal graduate and you long to revel in the pleasure of playing the professor who has forty or sixty minutes in which to lecture, to experiment, or to amplify the day's lesson. You see so many opportunities for adding collateral strength to the recitation,—so many things suggest themselves for making the period interesting. You loved your notebooks and clasped them close, forgetful of the midnight oil you burned in poring, delving, hoarding, that you might prepare yourself to appreciate the hour in the class-room in which your knowledge has increased and your intellect expanded in the manner ever new and delightful, and you naturally long to treat your boys and girls to the same enjoyments; and here let me say, it is possible for you to create a taste

for such pleasures in your pupils, provided you can inspire them to a sacrifice of time in study at home.

There may be but four or five of your twenty classes that you would or could treat to amplified recitations, and, perhaps, but two of the four or five lessons need be prepared at home; but the alacrity with which your pupils in advanced grades acquiesce to the proposition and the assiduity with which they maintain the home study will depend on your ability to make the need of extra work apparent and to keep the text conned an enticing prelude to the larger interest awaited in the classroom.

I used to think it would be a grand thing if all of my pupils could come to school with lessons prepared in the way in which I early went to school, but I overlooked the possible condition into which the younger and more mischievous would fall while unoccupied with recitations. Therefore, I have come to think it unadvisable for the lower grades to have more than one or two lighter lessons,—preferably exercises,—to prepare out of school, as the time which can be devoted to a just development of their recitations necessitates small allotments from text-books, very easily mastered in the various branches during inter-recitation periods. We all know what a real nuisance the smart little fellow becomes,—the one who gets all his les-

sons at home, and so idles and plays in school that he has forgotten them by the time he is called upon to recite. We all know it is better for him to do the larger part of his studying in the school-room, under our eye and subject to our guidance.

But for the older pupils, to whom you could and should give more time, as you feel that their days in the school-room are growing fewer and still fewer in the majority of cases, the more lessons you can get them to prepare at home the better, if you are going to exert to the utmost the broadening effect of thoroughly developed lessons, and do your utmost to inspire a desire for higher education. With a high school in every large village and a university with state assistance in free scholarships, we are not doing our duty if we do not do our very best to inspire our advanced pupils to their best endeavor for that education which will enhance their pleasure in living and broaden their influence and usefulness in the world.

This is done most effectually, not so much by direct appeal as, subtly, by the hidden power of knowledge which the more uncovered in its beauty the stronger becomes its attraction for the pupil, until met by barriers of limitation, until unsatisfied, the pupil, grown student, finds the courage to lift the veil,—to leap the wall and stand face to face with mysteries more enticing than those practised by the Egyptian pas-

tophori. They came to college, raw country boys, from the furrow and the sheep trail,—from the hills of the charcoal pits and the obscure valleys,—with the quenchless light of a Maccabean miracle, their only attraction, a gleam in their eyes, and, to-day, they are preaching, pleading at the bar, teaching, experimenting with natural forces, amply repaying those who, in log cabins and little red schoolhouses, on hillside and in valley, took the time and trouble to make learning so attractive that the light of pine knot and tallow candle falling on the page of reason illumined a vista that did not vanish in the labyrinth of calculus.

Common school progress is necessarily slow. "It is the resultant of a multitude of forces aiding and opposing one another," says Peabody. But the individuality of the teacher is the strongest force amid the multitude. That altitude, where home lessons become a necessity in your country school, can be reached only by a long, steady pull,—by an unoppressive, but ever-expressed zeal,—by a constant exercise of all the faculties and artifices that are the attributes of a good teacher. When you have stimulated the conception of a desire, a new necessity is soon born.

We shall have children physically too weak to make home lessons advisable for them. We shall be opposed by parents who think their Willies and their Kitties

